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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: RENDITION BUSH-IRAQ IRAN GERMANY-
U.S. IRAQ-GERMANY CHINA U.S.;BERLIN

- A. Lead Stories Summary
- B. (U.S.) Allegations On Rendition Flights
- C. (U.S.-Iraq) Bush's "National Strategy For Victory In Iraq"
- D. (Iran) Nuclear Program
- E. (Germany-U.S.) Steinmeier Visit To Washington
- F. (Iraq-Germany) German National Kidnapped
- G. (China) Avian Flu

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H. (U.S.) Death Penalty

A. Lead Stories Summary

HEADLINES

"Demanding More Freedom" - Chancellor Promises Deeds
(Frankfurter Allgemeine)

Angela Merkel: Demanding More Freedom (Sueddeutsche
Zeitung)

Merkel: Let Us Demand More Freedom (Die Welt)

Merkel Announces "Government Of Deeds" (Frankfurter
Rundschau)

Merkel: Let Us Demand More Freedom (Tagesspiegel)

Merkel Remains Tough In Hostage Drama (Berliner Zeitung)

Editorials focused on Chancellor Merkel's first governmental
address. ZDF-TV's early evening newscast heute and ARD-TV's
early evening newscast Tagesschau opened with stories on
Chancellor Merkel's first governmental address to the
Bundestag.

B. (U.S.) Allegations On Rendition Flights

1. "Back To Reason Again"

Thomas Klau judged in an editorial in business daily
Financial Times Deutschland of Hamburg (12/1):

"Even Washington is slowly realizing that the U.S.
reaction to 9/11 will enter the history books as one of the
worst chapters in U.S. history. A president failed who
ordered the conquest of Iraq without paying any attention to
the planning of the decisive post-war months. A political
class failed which tolerated for years that the means of
dictatorship - torture, arbitrary imprisonment, and
kidnapping - have turned into combat means of the U.S.
democracy. A democratic opposition failed, whose
presidential candidate John Kerry did not dare to turn
George W. Bush's rape of the U.S. democracy into an issue.
The United States has not yet returned to the state it
should have if the world is to turn into something which
resembles the U.S. ideals. We are still missing the ethical
compass, which we have expected from the United States since
Wilson and Roosevelt's days.

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"This moral blindness comes to the fore because, for instance, the United States focuses only on U.S. soldiers who have been killed when it comes to assessing the human costs of the Iraq war. There is silence about the much higher number of Iraqis who have lost their lives, their health or their living as a direct or indirect consequence of the U.S. invasion. The justification is that the United States has freed the country from Saddam. This is right but it does not relieve U.S. policy and the public from the duty to realize that they are responsible for the Iraqi victims of the U.S. adventure.. The country is still dying away

from the insight that the war against Iraq, like the brutal treatment of the enemy, are two symptoms of the same evil, namely the failure of the U.S. democracy following 9/11, a failure that became possible only because of the excited hyper-patriotism of the time after the attacks. A wiser president than George W. Bush would have saved America from this moral shipwreck.. America is only at the beginning of a path that will lead the country to admit that its old and admirable democracy has failed to pass the test of the challenge of mega-terror. Nothing is more depressing for America's friends than the picture of a president who does everything to prevent the Senate from prohibiting his agents to torture..

"The wrestling of the United States for the right fight against Islamists is also a wrestling of the West about the right values. This alone makes clear that Europe cannot idly watch.. As long as suspects are kidnapped to disappear in dungeons, it is almost insignificant where the aircraft make a stopover to refuel.. Europe's governments and intelligence services are in a dilemma, which does not offer a way out on the short term. The U.S. disregard of elementary rights is faced with the need to closely cooperate with the United States in the hunt for terrorists.

"In the fight against terrorists who are determined to kill as many people as possible, even the best democracies will cross the line but the United States goes even further by ignoring these lines because it allows arbitrariness and cruelty in the treatment of suspects to turn into a regular matter. Even when weighing all difficulties, the insight remains that European governments do themselves and the world a favor when disassociating themselves from this part of the U.S. anti-terror war and stop the spread of such practices onto their territory. This is not anti-Americanism but the defense of Western values against a

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western leading power which is only slowing waking up.."

2. Washington correspondent Christoph von Marschall filed the following editorial for centrist Der Tagesspiegel of Berlin (12/1):

"The CIA flights were even addressed in Chancellor Merkel's governmental address. but CIA overflights and landings are not illegal as long as we do not know that banned things were transported. The excitement despite weak facts is still great because the Bush administration and the CIA have given us reason to be distrustful of the U.S. government. In the fight against terror, they kidnapped people, imprisoned terror suspects for years without verdicts, and mistreated and tortured prisoners. But have the CIA flights any links to this? These are suspicions that sound plausible but these are not facts.

"But they get their explosiveness through other accusations. By referring to CIA members, U.S. papers reported of secret prisons in eastern Europe.. But evidence of secret prisons and airports are meager either. Foreign Minister Steinmeier and Secretary Rice agreed that Britain's Foreign Secretary Straw will submit questions on behalf of the EU. But this sounds as if the matter is to be shelved for the time being, according to the motto: don't call us, we'll call you. But Rice knows that she will be confronted with the issue next week in Berlin and at the NATO summit..

"Two circumstances make it difficult to investigate and assess matters. First, intelligence services always operate in a gray zone.. Second, the United States has promised to respect international law, but it has a different interpretation of what is allowed and what is prohibited,

and which rights suspects have. What is legal for Bush, can be illegal for Germans. First the facts, then a judgment: Steinmeiers's slogan would also be appropriate for the public."

3. "Torture State"

Michael Naumann argued in an editorial in center-left weekly Die Zeit of Hamburg (12/1):

"If the execution of a human being after years of waiting in prison cells is the ultimate form of torture, then this labeling of a 'torture state' has applied to the United States for a long time.. But the state-authorized

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torture by U.S. soldiers and CIA agents in cooperation with minions from Middle Eastern allies is unique among the Western civilized nations.. Vice President Cheney announced that the United States would 'take off its gloves' and 'embark upon different paths.' And this happened..

"Two years ago, Germany like the United States signed the UN Convention Against Torture and other cruel, inhuman treatments of prisoners. Article III bans the 'export' of prisoners to well-known torture states. But the foreign policy weight of Germany is too small to successfully press the United States to stick to international law and to refrain from humiliating of prisoners. But to commission Britain's Foreign Secretary Straw to intervene in Washington on behalf of the EU is ridiculous. A year ago, his office ignored its own ambassador to Uzbekistan who had protested the transfer of a prisoner to the regime in Tashkent with U.S. and probably British support. The ambassador resigned. The prisoner was cooked."

C. (U.S.-Iraq) Bush's "National Strategy For Victory In Iraq"

1. "Strategy Of Honesty"

Stefan Kornelius commented in center-left Sueddeutsche Zeitung of Munich (12/1):

"Bush's strategy does not really provide an answer to the question of how to reach the goals of stabilizing and securing Iraq and withdrawing troops. But it is an honest one. The transition in Iraq cannot follow an artificially set timetable; a radical withdrawal of the troops would cause incalculable chaos, and those who now want to cut and run would destroy America's credibility in the entire region and put the country at great risk. In short, a withdrawal cannot be predicted or even planned, although a reduction of forces looks likely after the parliamentary elections in December. A dangerous sentiment has evolved in the U.S. in recent weeks because the critics of the war rationale and the isolationists have formed an alliance. There had been many reasons for opposing the war and Bush is now dealt the results of his deafness three years ago. But America must now not withdraw into isolation. The rules of a porcelain shop apply: If you break something you have to pay for it."

2. "A Strategy For Withdrawal"

Michael Streck observed in leftist die tageszeitung of

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Berlin (12/1):

"We have to clarify a misunderstanding. Although the majority of Americans are unsatisfied with Bush's Iraq policy, polls show that the people would be ready to make more sacrifices if they were worthwhile. The president's

problem is that he can no longer justify the war at home and he cannot win in Iraq. What options does Bush have? His speech yesterday indicated that he defines victory primarily as a long-term political goal that only Iraqis themselves can reach. This definition makes it possible for him to claim that the U.S. paved the way for it, hoping that historians will be of the same opinion."

3. Right-of-center Main-Echo of Aschaffenburg (12/1) editorialized:

"Time is short, also for Bush. The American people, who will soon cast their ballots in Congressional midterm elections, are concerned and their minimal demand is a plan to end the war and to bring home the 150,000 U.S. soldiers currently deployed in Iraq. The president vaguely addressed this plan, saying that the troops will return when the mission is accomplished. Bush can now freely decide what an accomplished mission is. He can suggest steps towards victory in the future and hope that voters buy it. With that, Bush's plan to end the war is nothing more than a plan to save face and his political hide."

D. (Iran) Nuclear Program

1. "Partner Iran"

Klaus-Dieter Frankenberger commented in center-right Frankfurter Allgemeine (12/1):

"The U.S. administration has not been speaking of regime change in Iran for quite a while. The priority is to get Iran's extremist regime to renounce nuclear armament. That is not the end of the new realpolitik in U.S.-Iranian relations. Washington's ambassador to Iraq was just allowed to establish direct contacts with Teheran. That means that the Bush government needs, above all, Iran's cooperation to improve the security and the political situation in Iraq.. If Iran agrees on cooperation it will demand a price."

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E. (Germany-U.S.) Steinmeier Visit To Washington

1. National radio station DeutschlandRadio of Berlin (12/1) broadcast the following commentary by Hans-Peter Riese:

"Steinmeier need not be worried that Washington will bear a grudge for his close relationship with Gerhard Schröder. On the contrary, the coalition agreement with respect to foreign and security policies carries his handwriting and is also an expression of the will backed by the CDU/CSU to make a new beginning in relations with the United States.. If Steinmeier explicitly points out that Germany is dependent on U.S. support in the hostage crisis [in Iraq] because the Americans know better what is going on in Iraq, then it is as smart as is his reference to the fact that questions about CIA flights are raised because all governments are required to inform their publics, but not to pillory anyone. Foreign Minister Steinmeier paid a perfect visit to Washington. This gives us hope for a newly adjusted working relationship between Germany and the United States."

2. Sabine Adler commented on national radio station Deutschlandfunk of Cologne (11/30):

"Steinmeier proved to be a professional. He called things by their names without losing himself in meaningful

drivel, acted in a concentrated way, and was pleasingly unpretentious without embarrassing the other side. He who has claimed to make politics but not to sell politics, showed that this is no problem for him. Time will tell how long he will be able to act in such a self-confident way and which future direction he will take. If we want to judge Steinmeier, we must see him when he cooperates with Chancellor Merkel. Will she determine the future course? Does he allow her to do this? Will his policy differ little from Schröder's so that we jump out of the frying pan into the fire?.

"German foreign policy deserves corrections. It must attach greater attention to Germany's smaller neighbors, and must lead Europe together again. It should not lose its voice and close its eyes if Moscow, Ankara or whoever else tramples on human rights or if Washington uses means in the international fight against terrorism which will damage our society rather than defend it."

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F. (Iraq-Germany) German National Kidnapped

1. "Ransom Or Life?"

Malte Lehming noted in centrist Der Tagesspiegel of Berlin (12/1):

"In her first speech to parliament as chancellor, Merkel said Germany will not submit to blackmail. This statement referred to the kidnapping of Susanne Osthoff. At the same time, conservative politicians suggested paying ransom. How can this go together? The government pays ransom but does not submit to blackmail? The tough stance, it was said, referred to the political demands, not financial matters. But this is splitting hairs. What will the terrorists do with the money? Will they go on vacation, build a hospital or will they buy weapons and explosives for killing even more people with their next attack? Ransom is not harmless at all, and it is not a way out of the moral dilemma. You are guilty if you subsidize criminals. It fertilizes the soil of terrorism and rewards the business of kidnappers. Responsible politicians must not speculate about things like this in public. Merkel must set them right - behind closed doors."

G. (China) Avian Flu

1. Peter Sturm noted in an editorial in center-right Frankfurter Allgemeine (12/1):

"China is anxious to preserve its image. That is why the government in Beijing is reacting angrily to reports that the world was wrongly informed about the number of people who have died of the avian flu.. When the issue was openness, China did not catch our eyes in a positive way in the past. That is why the government should not be surprised at the newly rekindled distrust. But the problem probably lies somewhere else. Even the WHO said it would cooperate with Beijing. If we insinuate that this is the case: can Beijing's health minister be sure that he knows everything about the disease in his own country? It would not be the first time that one of several provinces simply ignored instructions from the capital. The openness, which Beijing preaches, has by no means reached all corners of the country. That is why the central government is well advised to check closely before it accuses others of 'maliciousness.'"

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H. (U.S.) Death Penalty

1. "Mixed Feelings"

Dietmar Ostermann commented in left-of-center Frankfurter Rundschau (12/1):

"Robin Lovitt will be spared death by injection. That is good news because the death penalty is always an inhuman act. At the same time, Lovitt's clemency is a political signal.. The pendulum is swinging back. Executions have become rare, and the sentiment is divided. However, the death penalty will probably not be abolished in the U.S. for a long time. Governor Warner supports the death penalty, but he does not want to capitalize on it. Maybe California Governor Schwarzenegger will place humanity over cynicism and pardon the author of children's books and peace activist, Stanley Tookie Williams, who insists on his innocence. The time for high-noon politicians is certainly coming to an end."

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